

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8, 9, 11, 15-19, 22-24 and 27-42 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 17, 18, 22 and 24 are amended, claims 7, 10, 12-14, 20, 21, 25 and 26 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter therein, and new claims 27-42 are added.

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representative by Examiner Beatty at the interview held on December 19, 2003, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicant's record of the interview.

In section 1 on page 2, the Office Action rejects claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1 and 17 are amended to remove the words "one of". Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating at the interview that this amendment overcomes the rejection. Regarding the rejection of claim 10, claim 10 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter therein. New claim 27 is an independent claim that corresponds to the subject matter previously claimed in dependent claim 10. However, the recitation from claim 10 specified by the Examiner in this rejection is reworded in new claim 27. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating at the Examiner interview that the replacement language of new claim 27 overcomes this rejection.

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112 be withdrawn.

In section 5 on page 6, the Office Action indicates that claims 7, 10, 13 and 14 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 7. New claim 27, from which claims 28-37 depend, corresponds to allowable claim 10. New claim 38, from which

claim 39 depends, corresponds to claim 1 plus a portion of allowable claim 13. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating at the interview that the portion of allowable claim 13 included in new claim 38 includes subject matter from allowable claim 13 that the Examiner found to result in the allowability of that claim. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating at the interview therefore that new claim 38 is allowable. New claim 40, from which claim 41 depends, corresponds to claim 1 plus a portion of allowable claim 14. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating at the interview that the portion of allowable claim 14 included in new claim 40 corresponds to subject matter that the Examiner found to be allowable. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating at the interview that, therefore, new claim 40 is allowable.

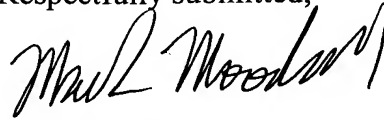
In paragraph 6 on page 7, the Office Action objects to claims 21, 25 and 26 as being dependent on rejected base claims, but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 18 is rewritten to incorporate all of the limitations of allowable claim 21 and intervening claim 20. Claim 24 is rewritten to incorporate all of the limitations of allowable claim 25. New claim 42 corresponds to claim 24 plus all of the limitations of allowable claim 26.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating at the interview that the foregoing amendments to the claims incorporating allowable subject matter in all independent claims will result in the allowance of the application.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-6, 8, 9, 11, 15-19, 22-24 and 27-42 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Mark R. Woodall
Registration No. 43,286

JAO:MRW/rle

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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